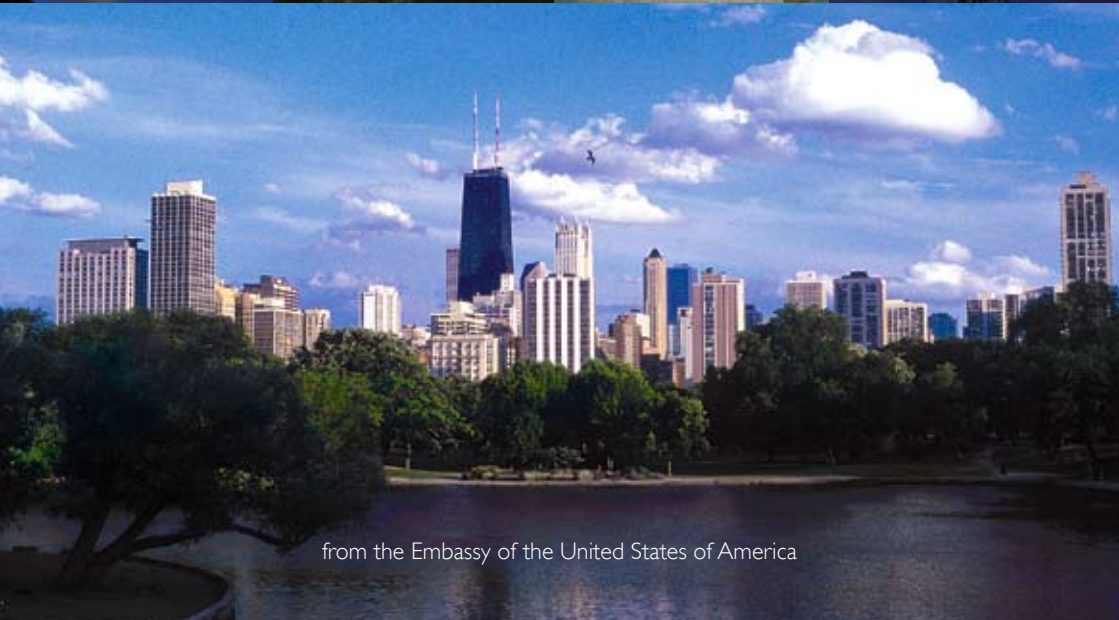


Tips, Helpful Information/Travel Hints
for Students in the
J-1 Summer Work and Travel Program





A Message from Victor Ashe, Ambassador

Dear Students,

Welcome! Thank you for choosing the United States as your destination for this year's J-1 Summer Work and Travel Program. Each year, thousands of Polish students join others from countries around the world to improve their English, gain valuable work experience, meet new friends, and get a personal view of what the United States is really like. Many enjoy it so much they return for a second or third summer.

The United States and its citizens welcome this interaction with students from different countries. Our country is unique in the world, a diverse mixture of cultures in a geographically varied setting. Whether working in a summer beach town, a camp in the Smokey Mountains near Knoxville, an amusement park in Middle America, or on the coast of Alaska, you are sure to have an experience to remember.

I encourage you to enjoy the "travel" portion of the Work and Travel experience to its fullest. Venture beyond the town where you are working once your assignment is complete and use the 30 extra days allowed for travel before you return to school. In this booklet you'll find some basic tips to help you start your Work and Travel experience right and web sites to visit about travel in the U.S. In addition, you will read about the experiences of Polish students who have participated in the program in previous years.

I hope you will thoroughly enjoy both parts – work and travel – of your stay in the United States this summer.

Sincerely yours,
Victor Ashe

Practical Information

The United States' Summer Work and Travel program permits post-secondary school students to work and travel throughout the U.S. Every year, the program draws many thousands of students from around the world, and Poland is no exception.

Many work at hotels, beach resorts and amusement parks across the U.S. Others are employed at casinos or national parks. And of course, they have the opportunity to see some of the cities and scenery of the fifty United States.

The Summer Work and Travel Program is a great opportunity to explore the U.S., get to know its culture and its people, improve English language skills, earn money, develop a network of international contacts, and gain marketable job skills.

REQUIREMENTS

To participate in this program, students must meet the following requirements.

Post-secondary school students who are actively pursuing a degree or a full-time course of study at an accredited educational institution in their country of residence may participate in the Summer Work/Travel program only during their summer vacation.

Students may not participate in this program during time periods other than their summer vacations.

Eligible participants must also be enrolled in an accredited educational institution and registered for a full-time course load following their participation in a Summer Work and Travel Program.

Prospective exchange visitors must also possess sufficient proficiency in the English language to participate in their programs.

HOW TO APPLY FOR THE SUMMER WORK AND TRAVEL PROGRAM

There are a number of local agencies that work with American sponsors and recruit Summer Work and Travel Program participants.

These agencies and American sponsors hold job fairs throughout Poland during the winter and spring during which qualified participants can be interviewed by prospective employers.

Local agencies can also help participants locate employment on their own.

The final step involves an interview with a consular officer at the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw or the Consulate General in Krakow, which the local agency will help to arrange.

The purpose of the interview is ensure that participants meet the requirements of the program and are eligible to receive visas.

For more information about visa application requirements:

IN THE U.S.

Once they enter the U.S., students can stay for up to four months, during which time they may spend up to one month traveling. When the program ends, students are expected to return home and continue their studies.

Income earned by Summer Work and Travel Program participants in the U.S. will be taxed, but applicants can apply for a refund upon return to Poland.

TRAVEL USA!

In addition, we encourage students to take advantage of the "travel" portion of the Summer Work and Travel Program. A list of resources for inexpensive and enjoyable travel in the U.S. is available in this booklet.

When visiting the U.S., be sure to get a taste both of the vibrant cities and of the magnificent natural beauty. From the skyscrapers of New York City to the snowy mountains of Colorado, from the deserts of Arizona to the national monuments of Washington D.C., the U.S. has a wide variety of sites that impress millions of visitors each year.

TEN WAYS TO GET A TASTE OF THE BEST OF THE U.S.:

- 1) Take a drive along the Pacific Coast Highway (Route 1) in California, which runs along the breath-taking coastline. Be sure to stop and see the bustle of Los Angeles, the tranquility of secluded Big Sur, and the beautiful beaches of Carmel, all before crossing San Francisco's world-famous Golden Gate Bridge.
- 2) Sample the classic American architecture of Chicago, and don't forget to have some pierogi if you're missing Poland—with the largest Polish population of any city besides Warsaw, Chicago is a hub of Polish-American culture.
- 3) Explore the unique landscape of Arizona, from the desert of Tucson to the red rocks of Sedona. Then visit the state capitol, Phoenix, one of the fastest-growing cities in the United States.
- 4) Take in the history to be found in Philadelphia. Visit Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence was signed and the U.S. Constitution was written, and make a stop to see the Liberty Bell, which rang before the first public reading of the Declaration.
- 5) See the wonders of Glacier National Park in Montana. A great place to hike, camp, bike, and fish, the park possesses some of the most striking natural beauty to be found in the U.S., right in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. Be sure to drive down Going-to-the-Sun Road for the magnificent views.
- 6) Wander through the streets of New York City, from the Financial District, Chinatown, Soho, and Greenwich Village up through Midtown, the theater district, and Museum Mile. If you like to walk, take an entire day and walk the entire length of Manhattan on Broadway. Don't forget to take in some professional sports games by seeing the New York Knicks or the New York Yankees in action.
- 7) Sample the flavors of the American South. Try Tennessee, where you can visit the home of Elvis Presley, check out some country music in Nashville, or just drink in the serenity of the tree-lined streets and beautiful old mansions. For some Cajun vibes, explore New Orleans, filled with great jazz, amazing seafood, and a party scene that never stops. Or explore cosmopolitan Atlanta, the site of the 1996 Summer Olympics, renowned for its beauty and its cultural prominence.
- 8) Visit Yellowstone Park, which contains close to sixty percent of the world's geysers, including the famed Old Faithful. View the park's incredible diversity of wildlife, including moose, elk, bison, coyotes, bobcats, and bighorn sheep.
- 9) Check out Seattle, the largest city in the Pacific Northwest. A cultural center, Seattle is a great place to hear live music—and of course, visitors can see the famous Space Needle, constructed for the 1962 World's Fair.
- 10) No visit to the United States would be complete without seeing the monuments and museums of the nation's capitol, Washington D.C. Take a tour of the White House, visit the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials and the Washington Monument, and visit the fantastic museums run by the Smithsonian Institution, where admission is free.

Information for Everyday Life in the U.S.

MONEY MATTERS

The basic unit of exchange in the United States is the dollar (\$), which is divided into 100 cents. One dollar is commonly written as \$1 or \$1.00. There are four denominations of commonly used coins: 1 cent, 5 cents, 10 cents, and 25 cents. Americans usually refer to coins, not by their value in cents, but by their names. A one-cent coin is a penny, a five-cent coin is a nickel, a ten-cent coin is a dime, and a 25-cent coin is a quarter. U.S. paper money (often called bills: for example, a "one dollar bill") comes in single-bill denominations of one dollar (\$1.00), five dollars (\$5.00), ten dollars (\$10.00), twenty dollars (\$20.00), fifty dollars (\$50.00), and one hundred dollars (\$100.00). You will immediately notice that, unlike in most other countries, U.S. bills are all the same size and all the same color. They are differentiated from each other by the number value and with the portrait of a different U.S. historical figure on each denomination. At first, you may find this confusing and you will need to watch which bills you use carefully. However, you will become accustomed to the currency and will soon be able to differentiate easily between the denominations. U.S. coins also are marked with the coin's value and each denomination is a different size.

Having a bankcard is very convenient, since it can be used all over the United States and even in other countries connected to the same banking system. Bankcards from other countries can also be used in the United States as long as they function on one of the banking networks used in the United States. Before leaving home, ask your bank if you can use your home country's bankcard in the United States. This is especially useful if, in case of emergency, you need to get money rapidly from home.

TIPPING

In the United States, tips (gratuities) are not automatically added to bills, as is customary in some other countries. Even if tipping remains a personal choice, it is usually expected when certain services are provided. You should be aware that the people who commonly receive tips are paid a wage that is lower than those who do not receive tips. They depend upon tips for a significant part, sometimes the majority, of their income. The average tip is usually 15 percent, but it can vary depending on the extent and the quality of the service provided.

Eating Out: The expected tip in a restaurant is 15 or 20 percent in a good restaurant with excellent service. You should leave your tip on the table for the waiter or waitress as you leave. If you pay with a credit card, you can add the tip to the credit card charges before you total the bill. The restaurant then gives that amount in cash to your server. If you sit at a counter in a restaurant, the tip is usually smaller; 10 to 15 percent is sufficient. In a fast-food restaurant, the bill is paid when the food is ordered and no tip is expected. In a cafeteria or a self-service restaurant, you pay the cashier after having chosen your meal and, again, no tip is expected.

Taxi Drivers: It is customary to give 10 to 15 percent of the total fare.

Airport and Hotel Porters: It is customary to give \$1.00 for each bag.

Barbers, Hairdressers, and Beauticians: They usually are tipped 10 to 15 percent of the bill.

Valet Parking: The attendant should usually receive \$1.00 to \$2.00.

Information for Everyday Life in the U.S

Never offer a tip to public officials, police officers, or government employees. This is against the law in the United States. There is no need to tip hotel desk clerks, bus drivers, theater ushers, salespeople, flight attendants, or gas station attendants.

RESTAURANTS

Restaurants in the United States range from inexpensive “fast-food” to very expensive restaurants. Some restaurants feature specialties of the region, others specialize in “ethnic” foods from various regions of the world. While some of these ethnic restaurants are very authentic, others have adapted their food to suit American tastes. It is safe to eat in restaurants in the United States since they are regularly inspected for cleanliness and for compliance with health codes. It is also safe to drink water from a tap in the United States. Bottled water is usually available in American restaurants for an extra charge.

MAILING ADDRESS

Before you leave home, give your correct mailing address in the United States to family and friends who will be writing to you. Be sure to include the “zip code.” A zip code is a five-digit number identifying the postal zone in which the address lies. Some private citizens, businesses, and organizations use more precise, nine-digit zip codes. For example, the zip code for the U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services district office in Helena, Montana, is 59626-0036.

USING THE TELEPHONE

Telephone numbers in the United States have 10 digits, including a seven-digit set of numbers that is the prime telephone number. Preceding the seven-digit number is the three-digit “area code.” The area code serves a wide region, often a large part of a state. Usually you need to dial the area code only if the number is in an area with a code different than your own. However, some more populated areas now have more than one area code and require you to dial both the area code and prime telephone number even if you live in the same city.

In many communities in the United States, when you need police, the fire department, or paramedics in an emergency situation, you simply dial “911.” Once you have dialed 911, the operator will ask you what the emergency is, ask for your address, and then summon the appropriate help. Most of the time, the operator will stay on the line and give you support or advice until help arrives. It is very important to call 911 only in an emergency situation, and it is illegal to use it otherwise.

GETTING A DRIVER'S LICENSE

If you plan to drive in the United States, you must have a valid driver's license. If you have an international driver's license, it is important to check whether the state where you are driving recognizes such a license, as not all states do. Check with the local office of the state motor vehicles department to get information on obtaining a state driver's license.

Resources for Planning Your Travel

Travel in the United States doesn't have to be expensive! You can see some great sights and still save money if you choose your transportation and accommodation wisely. Here are some helpful websites:

GENERAL TRAVEL INFORMATION

- ▶ Geography and Travel (<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/travel/travel.htm>) – guide to key sites and features of the United States
- ▶ SeeAmerica.org – a portal to the major U.S. travel websites
- ▶ Fodors.com, Frommers.com, LonelyPlanet.com, Virtualtourist.com – worldwide travel guides
- ▶ Travelocity.com, Expedia.com, Orbitz.com – airline tickets, hotels, cars, vacations & cruises
- ▶ HiddenAmerica.com – an “off-the-beaten path turn on the information highway”
- ▶ Citysearch.com – city guide to entertainment, restaurants, events, hotels, movies and businesses
- ▶ Polish Embassy in Washington, D.C. – www.polandembassy.org

ATTRACTIONS/THINGS TO DO

- ▶ Recreation.gov – Recreation.gov is a partnership among various agencies aimed at providing a single, easy-to-use website with information about public recreation areas. The site can be searched for recreation areas by state, by recreational activity, by agency, or by map.
- ▶ ThemeParks.About.com – information and reviews about theme parks and amusement parks

TRANSPORTATION

- ▶ RandMcNally.com, MapQuest.com – maps, driving directions, planning a trip
- ▶ Amtrak.com – train travel

- ▶ Greyhound.com, PeterPanBus.com – bus travel

HOTELS & MOTELS

- ▶ All-Hotels.com – travel, hotels, discount hotel reservations and lodging
- ▶ MagazineUSA.com – travel guide about the United States
- ▶ BudgetHotels.com – online reservations for hotels and motels
- ▶ Motel6.com, Super8.com – inexpensive hotel chains

ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION

- ▶ YMCA.net – Young Men's Christian Association
- ▶ www.YWCA.org – Young Women's Christian Association
- ▶ Hostelling International – USA (hiayh.org) – the Hostelling International network in the U.S.
- ▶ Bed and Breakfast Inns – bbonline.com
- ▶ HomeExchange.com – international home exchange and home swap service
- ▶ GoCampingAmerica.com – official website of the non-profit National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds (ARVC), the trade association representing the commercial RV park and campground industry throughout the United States
- ▶ DudeRanches.com – resource for dude and guest ranches across North America

WEATHER AND CONVERSION TOOLS

- ▶ Weather.com, National Weather Service (nws.noaa.gov)
- ▶ Exchange Rate Conversion (www.oanda.com)
- ▶ Interactive Units Converter (sciencemadesimple.com/conversions.html) – measurements available for conversions include weight and mass, distance and length, capacity and volume, speed, and temperature

*All information is adapted from
“Getting Ready to Go: Practical Information for Living and Studying in the United States,”
a publication of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State.*

Students tell their experience...

ANNA TOMCZYK



Wielu z nas marzy o podróżach, poznawaniu odległych i tajemniczych zakątków świata, o spotykaniu nowych ludzi żyjących w odmiennej kulturze, mających inny kolor skóry, będących innego wyznania, mówiących w innym języku. Nie zawsze jednak nasze marzenia urzeczywistniają się. Dlaczego? Długo by pisać, ale po co. Może lepiej będzie, jeżeli napiszę jak te wydawałyby się nierealne plany i marzenia mogą się spełnić. Odpowiedzią jest program „Work and Travel”.

Osobiście uczestniczyłam w programie trzykrotnie. Początkowo pełna obaw i niepokojów. Obcy kraj, obcy ludzie, ... Moja decyzja okazała się być strzałem w dziesiątkę. Praca w parkach rozrywki o nazwach Cedar Point i Busch Gardens wiele mnie nauczyła. Dzięki temu stałam się osobą otwartą, łatwo nawiązującą kontakty, samodzielną, umiejącą sobie radzić w trudnych sytuacjach. Z perspektywy czasu widzę, jak bardzo przydatne okazują się być te cechy. Pokonałam barierę językową, z cichej, raczej małomównej osoby przerodziłam się w gadułę. Niewątpliwie w przełamaniu moich wewnętrznych oporów pomogli mi sami Amerykanie – ludzie niezwykle przyjaźni, wyrozumiali i chętni do pomocy. Bardzo szybko praca stała się świetną rozrywką, możliwością nawiązania licznych przyjaźni, okazją do śmiechu i zabawy. Niektóre przyjaźnie trwają nadal, i choć dzielą nas tysiące mil dzięki e-mailom i telefonom jestem w stałym kontakcie z moimi przyjaciółmi z USA.

Program „Work & Travel” umożliwił mi zwiedzenie wielu cudownych miejsc, w które obfitują Stany Zjednoczone. Mogłam zobaczyć niesamowity cud natury, jakim bez wątpienia jest wodospad Niagara. Spędziłam niezapomniane

wakacje na Florydzie, które z perspektywy Polski wydają się tak nierealne. Błękit oceanu, gorący piasek plaży, palmy kokosowe to prawdziwy raj. Wymarzone miejsce na odpoczynek zarówno dla tych, którzy lubią leniuchowanie na plaży, jak i dla tych, którzy chcą odwiedzić ciekawe miejsca jak Key West, parki rozrywki SeaWorld, Disneyland czy tętniące życiem Miami. W swych wspomnieniach nie mogę zapomnieć o miastach, których po prostu nie można nie odwiedzić. Wystarczy wspomnieć o Waszyngtonie, Nowym Yorku czy Bostonie.

Często spotykam się z opinią, że nie można być obojętnym wobec USA. Są tylko dwie możliwości albo się zakochać w tym kraju, albo go znienawidzić. Osobiście jeszcze nie spotkałam nikogo, kto zaliczałby się do drugiej grupy osób. Dla mnie Stany Zjednoczone to kraj wyjątkowy pod każdym względem. Mam nadzieję, że dzięki programowi „Work & Travel” jeszcze wielu młodych ludzi będzie miało szansę się o tym przekonać.

TOMASZ SUPADY



If I would have to explain and describe to the person who has never participated in the Summer Work and Travel program what it is like, I would just say that it is a fantastic way to spend your summer, improve your English, meet new people, make friends in America, earn good money, and of course travel. Life on the other side of the pond is different than in Europe. After completing your summer job, you just take your backpack and have a fantastic 30-day period to travel with your friends. Big,

Students tell their experience...

AGNIESZKA KRUKOWSKA



My Work and Travel experience made not only visiting the United States possible but also helped

me a lot in my academic and professional career. As visiting America has always been my dream, I applied for the Work and Travel Program as soon as I could and I succeeded. I worked at a summer camp as a lifeguard and swimming instructor, and when the camp was over I jumped on a Greyhound bus and started a wonderful journey all over the USA. The opportunity to experience real life in the USA helped me truly understand and appreciate American values, as well as tangibly influence my life here in Poland.

OSKAR GRASS



I was a participant on a Work and Travel Program several times. I recommend the program for everybody who would like to earn some money, practice English language and visit many beautiful and interesting places. The United States is an enormous and diverse country but I think that no matter where your destination point will be, you just can't be disappointed. You will have many opportunities to meet people of different origins and make friends with them. It is in the US that you will learn what consumer rights are. It is in the US that you will see what real cities, such as New York City, look like.

If you love to feel free, if you like smiling faces and beautiful places, or if you are a big fan of cars and great highways then I can assure you that Work and Travel Program is going to be an unforgettable experience for you.

MONIKA CZECH



Zaczął się od tego, że postanowiłam nie nudzić się w kolejnej wakacje. Program Work and Travel okazał się strzałem w dziesiątkę.

Korzyści wynikających z wzięcia w nim udziału jest wiele. To za mało by powiedzieć, że to szansa dla tych, którzy chcą połączyć przyjemne z pożytecznym. Dla mnie każdy wyjazd był nową, cudowną przygodą, połączoną z obcowaniem z ludźmi z całego świata, poznawaniem kultury USA, oraz zdobywaniem cennych doświadczeń, przydatnych w przyszłym życiu i karierze.

W Ohio byłam kasjerką, w Wirginii kelnerką i recepcjonistką. W zeszłym roku w Kalifornii pracowałam w biurze i księgowości. Dzięki pracy na tak wielu stanowiskach resztkę wydaję bez zastanowienia, wiem jak przyrzą-

Students tell their experience...

dzic „Krwawą Mary”, wszelkie urządzenia biurowe nie mają przede mną tajemnic i co najważniejsze – swobodnie rozmawiam po angielsku.

Zwiedziłam USA. Byłam nad wodospadem Niagara, w Nowym Yorku i Waszyngtonie. Zobaczyłam San Francisco, Las Vegas i Los Angeles. Podziwiałam wielki Kanion. Dzięki podróżom poznałam smak przygody, do dziś uśmiecham się, gdy przypominę sobie kąpiel w lodowatej wodzie Oceanu Spokojnego pod koniec września, rozmowy z Chińczykami na temat serka tofu w Chinatown w San Francisco i przeżrane w Las Vegas 50\$...

Obcowałam z ludźmi z całego świata. Najmilej wspominam całonocne nieraz rozmowy przy zupkach chińskich, kiedy to wspólnie z Czechami, Węgrami, Meksykanami czy Koreańczykami opowiadaliśmy o naszej kulturze, stylu życia... Nauczyłam się od nich wielu rzeczy, najbardziej jednak zapamiętałam amerykańską lekcję otwartości, spontaniczności i optymizmu. Nawiązałam liczne między narodowe znajomości. Mam teraz przyjaciół ze Słowacji, Kolumbii, Tajwanu. I chłopaka z Bułgarii.

Nauczyłam się samodzielności, odpowiedzialności za podejmowane decyzje, szacunku do pracy i pieniędzy, odporności, pewności siebie, zaradności.

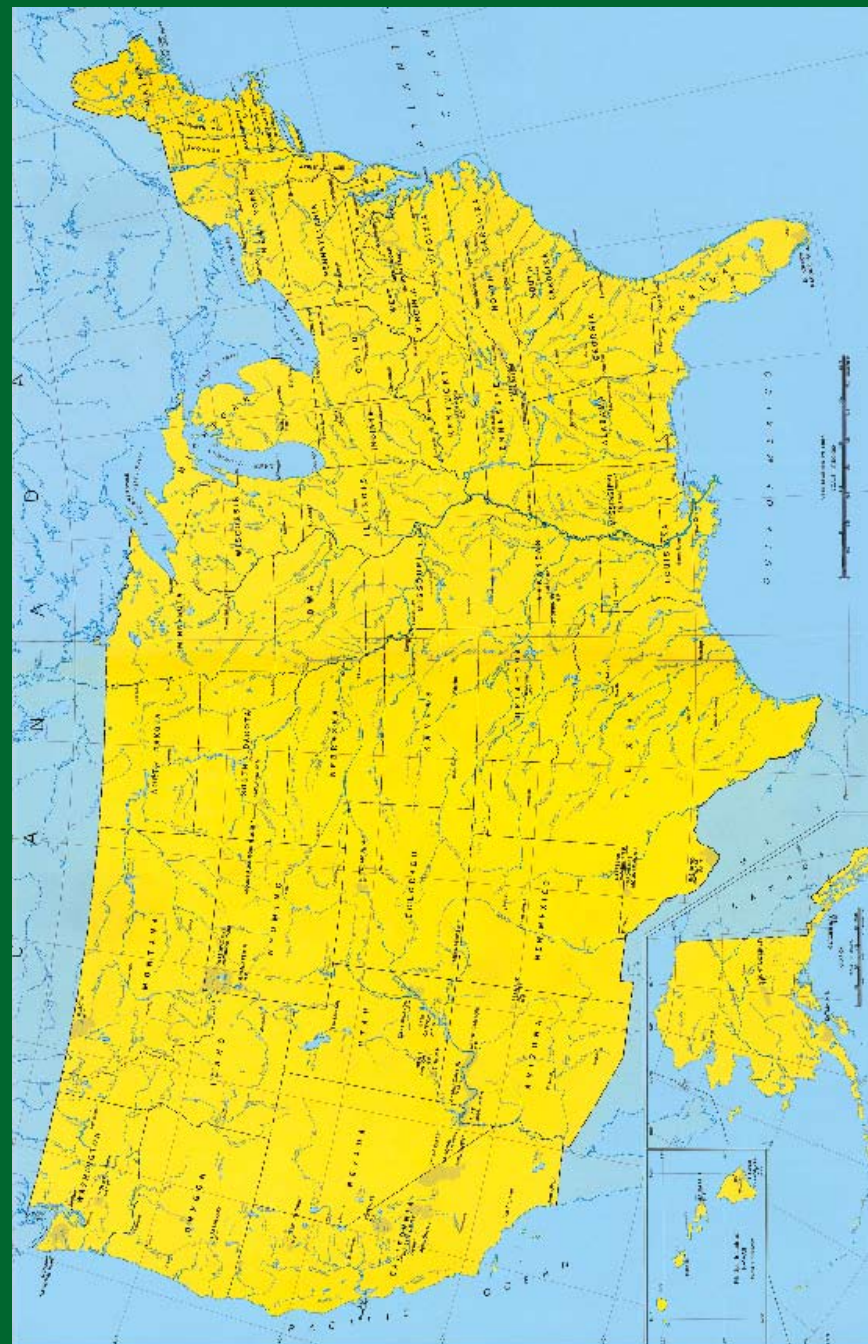
Program Work and Travel był czymś dużo większym niż ratunkiem na kolejne nudne wakacje.

Był przygodą, cennym doświadczeniem i nauką o tym, jak ważne jest korzystanie z nadarzających się okazji.

ROMAN JAROCKI



Work and Travel is the best opportunity to visit and understand the United States. For me it was the American dream come true. Landing in New York with only one backpack, in three months time I brought home an unforgettable experience and deep understanding of American values, something that is hard to learn from books or TV. For me, an economics student, working and living in the US was the best way to learn how the real market economy works, what private property and consumer rights are. Work and Travel experience is definitely an eye-catching point in my CV and can be recommended to anyone who wants to know what he is made of.





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Cover photos: Courtesy by the Convention and Tourism Centers in California, Montana, Missouri, Colorado, New York, Florida and Chicago, Illinois.

